

Dan Elliott (AP), Gold King Mine Long-Term Treatment Question

1. Is EPA currently conducting a detailed evaluation of mine discharge sources in the [Upper Animas Watershed] area, or plans to conduct such an evaluation?

*EPA's immediate focus has been on getting the temporary treatment system constructed and operating at the Gold King Mine. We have already compiled significant data on Cement Creek, and we are actively engaged in discussions with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Bureau of Land Management and local stakeholders regarding contaminant sources and impacts in the upper basin and potential solutions.*

Source text cited from HQ-approved GKM Q&A

Although EPA prepared a draft HRS report for Cement Creek in 2011, significant new environmental data has been collected since then that needs to be considered. EPA has not initiated a new HRS report but estimates that, once initiated, it would take 3-6 months to complete one, followed by the rulemaking process described above. This rulemaking process includes releasing the HRS report and supporting references for a 60-day public comment period.

EPA is committed to work in concert with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment in answering questions about the potential for adding the Upper Animas Mining District sites to the NPL and listening to the concerns of members of the public, affected tribes and elected officials. These questions and concerns will shape any decision to initiate an NPL listing process. As a matter of policy, EPA seeks concurrence from the state governors or a tribe, when the tribe has jurisdiction, prior to NPL proposal.

BLM and USFS representatives have been active participants in stakeholder and community meetings, and we expect this participation to continue. Discussions of a potential NPL site necessarily would include these federal land managers. EPA understands both agencies have been conducting independent assessment work to understand potential environmental concerns associated with lands they manage and they have undertaken this work cooperatively with EPA.